

THE CANADIAN FORUM

VOLUME 51

From April 1971 to March 1972

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(E) Editorial
 (I) Interview
 (F) Fiction
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YET ANOTHER SELLOUT!

The CANADIAN FORUM, for fifty years a soapbox for the nation's most vocal bleeding hearts, has been sold to Time-Life Inc., a U.S. literary empire. The sale, announced by moderate economic nationalist editor Abraham Rotstein, was reportedly made necessary by rising prediction costs and an increasingly moribund intellectual well-spring.

Rotstein said he was convinced the FORUM would continue publication, its editorial integrity unimpaired. "Time-Life has assured us of its desire to maintain the FORUM as a left-wing voice in the Canadian Wilderness. The CANADIAN FORUM will continue to provide Canada's intellectual elite with perception and analysis of our economic, political and cultural fabric with a light mix of book reviews, poetry and the odd erotic advertisement. Canadian intellectuals may rest assured the FORUM shall not fail in the challenge to maintain the high standards of excellence that it has followed for half a century."

Sale price in the deal (arranged in secret negotiations over a 3-hour luncheon at the Royal York, presided over by former finance minister and guru to a generation of Canadian nationalists, Walter Gordon) was not disclosed. However, sources close to the situation said that Time-Life paid \$750 for the Forum's plant and equipment and, acting for an unidentified U.S. government agency, \$10 million for the magazine's subscription lists.

Reaction to the announcement of the sale has been swift. Most regular contributors to the magazine and other prominent Canadians expressed shock but felt the FORUM would be a better magazine for the change. Several contributors — Eric Kierans, Mel Watkins, James Laxer as well as such authors as Farley Mowat, Pierre Berton and Al Purdy — said they believe the sale to Time-Life would allow them

access to the U.S. market. "We'll be able to bore from within," they said gleefully in a joint statement. The writers said they were convinced the CANADIAN FORUM would become a much more influential publication and that both U.S. and Canadian leaders would pay it more heed.

Some Canadians, however, attacked the sale as a sellout of Canada's heritage. Spokesmen for the National Archives, the Royal Ontario Museum and Upper Canada Village deplored "this tragic act". Speaking without official sanction, they assailed the magazine's directors for not offering Canadians the opportunity to buy the FORUM.

"Business is business," said Rotstein. "No one in Canada — and we approached them all — wanted to keep the FORUM here." He went on to echo Gordon's position that the magazine needed more capitalization and operating funds to strengthen its competitive position vis-à-vis other magazines, radio and TV.

Meanwhile, protests are beginning to be heard from across the land. In Come By Chance, Newfoundland, a cod fisherman said that he opposed the sale to a U.S. company. "What's wrong with going British?" he demanded. In Quebec a group of elderly priests sought assurance that the FORUM would print traditional scriptural verses in French. In the west, protest meetings and demonstrations were being planned by irate grain farmers joining for the first time with hog producers to register their "deep outrage". They claimed it was just another example of the Eastern establishment "trying to tell us what to read and think".

The growing protests have made little impact on the Forum, "If they don't like it, they can go fuck themselves," the magazine declared in a prepared statement released to The Star in advance.

Submitted anonymously by a Forum reader

